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## **Councilmembers Seek to Transform San Jose into America's "Solar City"**

Boasting some of the nation's most innovative solar technology companies, and having recently been named by the U.S. Department of Energy as one of three "Solar American Showcase" cities, the City of San Jose is poised to become America's "Solar City." Now, San Jose Councilmembers Sam Liccardo and Judy Chirco look to take advantage of San Jose's stellar climate--with 300 days of sun a year--to put that technology to good use.

Councilmembers Liccardo and Chirco have announced a policy initiative designed to make San Jose a national leader in renewable energy, calling for a city-wide financing strategy for widespread installation of solar panels on public buildings, all without increasing taxes or tapping the General Fund. (View Liccardo and Chirco's Memo "Transforming San Jose into America's next Solar City at [http://www.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/CommitteeAgenda/Rules/052307/Rules052307\\_H3.pdf](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/CommitteeAgenda/Rules/052307/Rules052307_H3.pdf) to be discussed at tomorrow's Rules & Open Government Committee.)

Although San Jose city staff has tried to find creative ways to incrementally add solar panels to specific municipal structures, such as San Jose's sewage treatment plant and its Tech Museum of Innovation, the City lacks a financing plan for any bolder, city-wide initiative. "A broad vision like this carries a substantial price tag," Liccardo notes, "but the failure to find ways to finance these energy-saving measures carries far higher costs for our City and for our children."

"We have an opportunity to produce clean energy locally, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and begin to offset volatile energy prices borne by our citizens," added Councilmember Chirco. "San Jose's history is rooted in innovation. Widespread solar deployment on our public buildings is keeping with that tradition. Let's have this conversation."

San Jose's innovative Environmental Services and Public Works departments have worked diligently to find ways to make our city buildings more "green" by meeting Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) targets through improvements in design, construction materials, and the like. Despite widespread success in building more "green" libraries, community centers, and other civic buildings, efforts to integrate solar technology into public construction, have not yet yielded fruit. Meanwhile, innovations in the field of solar technology continue within the city, as leading companies such as Nanosolar and SunPower call San Jose home.

With the attached memorandum to the Council's Rules Committee, Liccardo and Chirco seek to augment the workplan for staff and the Transportation and Environment Committee to find a means for the massive capital investment required to retrofit dozens of San Jose's major civic buildings with solar panels - and to include them in projects currently in the pipeline.

Liccardo noted that "two options appear particularly worthy of consideration, and possibly in tandem: a solar bond initiative, and widespread implementation of power purchase agreements." Those options are explained in the attached memorandum.

"I appreciate our feathered friends, Clara and Jose, as much as the next guy," Liccardo observed, referring to the birds which have obtained widespread attention for their recent breeding on City Hall. "Our famous falcons shouldn't be the only adornment on City buildings, though." Liccardo continued, "With the implementation of this proposal, we'll see our City buildings covered in solar cells."

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